

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-06

CCO-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07 /078 W

----- 095601

R 101237Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1047

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, SEWEL, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: BEIRUT'S ELECTRICITY CRISIS

1. FOR BACKGROUND OF ADDRESSEES, MISTWOV PROVIDES FOLLOWING ANALYSIS OF SOURCES AND DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRICITY USED IN BEIRUT AS GLEANED FROM BASIC REFERENCES AVAILABLE TO IT.

2. SOURCES. IN 1973, LAST YEAR FOR WHICH STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE, BEIRUT'S POWER NEEDS WERE MET BY FOUR MAIN POWER PLANTS IN ROUGHLY FOLLOWING PROPORTIONS: LITANI HYDROELECTRIC COMPLEX - 35 PERCENT; JIYYA THERMAL COMPLEX - 29 PER CENT; ZUQ MIKHA'IL THERMAL COMPLEX - 25 PER CENT; NAHR IBRAHIM HYDROELECTRIC COMPLEX - 8 PER CENT. TWO OF THESE ARE LOCATED SOUTH OF BEIRUT IN NOMMINALLY MUSLIM-HELD TERRITORY -- LITANI AND JIYYA; TWO ARE LOCATED NORTH OF BEIRUT IN CHRISTIAN-HELD TERRITORY -- ZUQ MIKHA'IL AND NAHR IBRAHIM.

3. DISTRIBUTION. DELIVERY OF POWER TO BEIRUT'S TWO DISTRIBUTION STATIONS -- AL-BAWSHURIYYA TO EAST AND HAZMIYYA TO SOUTH-EAST -- IS ASSURED BY HIGH TENSION OVERHEAD LINES.

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4. POWER FROM LITANI AND JIYYA COMPLEXES IS DELIVERED

OVER SEVERAL LINES THAT APPROACH BEIRUT ON FOLLOWING AXIS: ARAMUN, SHIMLAN, AYTAT, BDADUN, WADI SHAHRUR, JUMHUR, HAZMIYYA (JUMHUR-HAZMIYYA LINES ARE UNDERGROUND). AROUND BDADUN, THESE LINES CROSS FROM NON-CHRISTIAN TO CHRISTIAN-HELD TERRITORY, AND THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO REPEATED DAMAGE DURING BATTLES THAT HAVE RAGED IN AREA BETWEEN ALEY AND BAABDA THROUGHOUT LEBANESE CRISIS.

5. POWER FROM ZUQ MIKHA'IL AND NAHR IBRAHIM COMPLEXES IS DELIVERED OVER SEVERAL LINES THAT APPROACH BEIRUT ON FOLLOWING AXIS: ANTILYAS, JUDAYDA, AL-BAWSHURIYYA. THESE LINES, WHICH ARE WELL BEHIND CHRISTIAN LINES, HAVE REMAINED INTACT.

6. IN CITY OF BEIRUT ITSELF, SERIES OF SUBSTATIONS PROVIDES POWER TO VARIOUS QUARTERS OF CITY. THESE ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED BY UNDERGROUND LINES IN CIRCULAR PATH AS FOLLOWS: HAZMIYYA, PINE FOREST (SABRA), UNESCO (TARIQ JADIDA), WEST BEIRUT (ARTS & METIERS), SERAIL, GAZ (ORTHODOX HOSPITAL), AL-BAWSHURIYYA. IN ADDITION, UNDERGROUND SHUNT LINES CONNECT HAZMIYYA AND AL-BAWSHURIYYA AND OVERHEAD SHUNT LINES CONNECT JUMHUR AND BAWSHURIYYA AS PART OF NATIONAL GRID.

7. BEIRUT'S ELECTRICITY SHORTAGE ARISES FROM TWO PROBLEMS: (A) DAMAGE TO HIGH TENSION LINES IN BDADUN AREA, WHICH HAS EFFECTIVELY CUT BEIRUT OFF FROM ALL POWER GENERATED IN SOUTH; (B) LACK OF FUEL OIL TO OPERATE ZUQ MIKHA'IL PLANT, WHICH HAS RESTRICTED FLOW OF POWER FROM NORTH INTO BEIRUT TO NAHR IBRAHIM PRODUCTION ALONE. NAHR IBRAHIM PRODUCTION IS AT PRESENT ONLY POWER COMING INTO CITY. EVEN AT BEST OF TIMES, ASSUMING HIGH FLOW OF WATER AND NO DIVERSION TO CHRISTIAN AREAS OF MOUNT LEBANON, THIS WOULD PROVIDE ONLY 8 PER CENT OF BEIRUT'S NORMAL NEEDS. AT PRESENT, LOW WATER LEVELS AND REDUCED CONSUMPTION IN BEIRUT MORE OR LESS BALANCE EACH OTHER OUT, LEAVING NAHR IBRAHIM'S CONTRIBUTION AT AROUND 8 PERCENT OF CURRENT NEEDS. THIS IS BARELY ENOUGH TO POWER CITY'S WATER PUMPS.

8. IN THIS PERSPECTIVE, DAMAGE TO OVERHEAD SHUNT LINES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BETWEEN JUMHUR AND AL-BAWSHURIYYA WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM TALL ZA'TAR FIGHTING IS NOT CRUCIAL. AS NOTED ABOVE, REAL OBSTACLES TO DELIVERY OF POWER TO BEIRUT ARE (A) DAMAGE TO SOUTHERN HIGH TENSION LINES AROUND BDADUN AND (B) LACK OF FUEL OIL FOR ZUQ MIKHA'IL COMPLEX.

9. SOLUTIONS. TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS,ELECTRICITY COMPANY IS ATTEMPTING TO WORK ON SEVERAL FRONTS: IN SHORT

RUN, (A) TO PROVIDE FUEL OIL FROM ROMANIA TO ZUQ MIKHA'IL THERMAN COMPLEX, AND (B) TO EXTEND EXISTING SECONDARY TRANSMISSION LINE RUNNING FROM JUMHUR THROUGH HALDE TO DAMOUR ANOTHER TEN KILOMETERS TO JIYYA THERMAL COMPLEX AND PROVIDE POWER TO BEIRUT FROM THERE USING FUEL OIL FROM ZAHRANI REFINERY; AND, IN LONGER RUN, (C) TO REPAIR SOUTHERN HIGH TENSION LINES AS SECURITY PERMITS.

10. REACTIVATION OF ZUQ MIKHA'IL COMPLEX WOULD ALLOW PROVISION OF 25 PERCENT OF BEIRUT'S NORMAL NEEDS IN ADDITION TO 8 PERCENT BEING PROVIDED BY NAHR IBRAHIM COMPLEX. PROVISION OF POWER OVER JIYYA-DAMOUR-KHALDE-JUMHUR SECONDARY LINE WOULD BOOST THIS BY ADDITIONAL 10 PER CENT OF CITY'S NEEDS. FINALLY, REPAIR OF SOUTHERN HIGH-TENSION LINES WOULD ALLOW DELIVERY OF ANOTHER 53 PER CENT. PRESENT REDUCTION OF DEMAND IN BEIRUT WOULD OF COURSE MEAN THAT ANY OF ABOVE STEPS WOULD IN FACT EASE SITUATION EVEN MORE THAN ABOVE FIGURES INDICATE.

11. ALL OF THESE SOLUTIONS FACE OBSTACLES, HOWEVER. FOR ONE THING, THEY ALL DEPEND ON CHRISTIAN OR SYRIAN GOOD WILL, AND IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER, GIVEN STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS, THESE PARTIES WILL ALLOW IMPROVEMENT IN ELECTRICITY SITUATION, AT LEAST IN WEST BEIRUT, BEYOND WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PUMP WATER. CHRISTIAN OR SYRIAN GOOD WILL IS VITAL TO REACTIVATE ZUQ MIKHA'IL PLANT IN CHRISTIAN TERRITORY, TO DELIVER FUEL OIL FROM ZAHRANI REFINERY THROUGH SIDON TO JIYYA PLANT, AND TO ALLOW LONG-TERM REPAIRS TO HIGH-TENSION LINES, ALL OF WHICH PASS THROUGH CHRISTIAN-HELD TERRITORY. ALTHOUGH CHAMOUN, IN HIS CAPACITY AS MINISTER OF HYDROELECTRIC RESOURCES, HAS SIGNED PURCHASE AGREEMENTS FOR ROMANIAN FUEL OIL FOR ZUQ MIKHA'IL IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR HOW MUCH OF ZUQ'S PRODUCTION WILL BE DELIVERED TO BEIRUT AND HOW MUCH WILL GO TO ALLEVIATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHORTAGES IN CHRISTIAN AREA OF MOUNT LEBANON. BEYOND THIS, IT WOULD BE TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE TO DELIVER POWER TO ASHRAFIYYA AND OTHER CHRISTIAN QUARTERS OF BEIRUT WITHOUT DELIVERING IT TO WEST BEIRUT. IN SHORT, ELECTRICITY, ESPECIALLY FOR WEST BEIRUT, IS POTENTIALLY AS POLITICAL A QUESTION AS ANY OTHER IN CONTEXT OF LEBANON'S ONGOING CRISIS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTRIC POWER, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT06086
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760267-0096
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760771/aaaackkv.tel
Line Count: 161
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <17 AUG 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEIRUT'S ELECTRICITY CRISIS
TAGS: ENRG, SWEL, PINS, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006